SOUTH VIET NAM In Struggle

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CENTRAL ORGAN OF THE SOUTH VIET NAM NATIONAL FRONT FOR LIBERATION

editorial

Hail The Fifth Founding Anniversary of the AVNNDPF

FIVE years ago, in the throes of the Mau Than Tet offensives and uprisings, a political conference was held somewhere near Saigon and gave birth to a new patriotic front : the Alliance of Viet Nam National, Democratic and Peace Forces. Its Manifesto for National Salvation made clear its position as follows : " Unite all patriotic forces and individuals, resolutely resist foreign aggression, overthrow completely the Nguyen Van Thieu — Nguyen Cao Ky puppet regime, form a National Union Government, achieve independence, democracy and peace." Its programme of action consists of three main points : 1. — bring the war to an end, restore peace, recover national independence and sovereignty ; 2. — build an independent, free, peaceful and prosperous South Viet Nam ; 3. — bring about discussions between the Northern and Southern zones of Viet Nam, on the basis of equality and with due regard for each one's particularities with a view to the eventual reunification of the country.

The AVNNDPF conference extended its affectionate greeting to the South Viet Nam NFL, a patriotic front which had made a worthy contribution to national liberation. It advocated coordinated action with the latter for the recovering of the country's independence, sovereignty and peace.

The Presidium of the Central Committee of the NFL in a declaration expressed its deep gratification at the emergence of the Alliance, its support for its political line and programme of action and its readiness for unified action with it in the common effort for the independence, democracy, peace, neutrality and prosperity of South Viet Nam, for a free and happy life for the South Vietnamese people and for the peaceful reunification of the country.

Thus the national liberation movement was strengthened by a new front allied to the NFL set up since 1960 upon broad mass bases. The Alliance embraced essentially intellectuals, students, industrialists and traders of the enemy-occupied areas as well as army officers and civil servants of the Saigon regime awakened to the national cause.

THE Alliance's social composition and political position threw light on the headway made by the movement of the urban people and the changes amidst the higher segments of the South Vietnamese society. Members of its Central Committee like Trinh Dinh Thao, dean of the Vietnamese barristers in Saigon, Lam Van Tet, an engineer and big landlord, Superior Bonze Thich Don Hau, woman doctor Duong Quynh Hoa and woman professor Nguyen Dinh Chi and others were true representatives of higher layers of South Vietnamese society, revolted by US neocolonialist aggression and US agents' treason.

The Alliance's coming into being was a great political event and an important contribution to the success of the 1968 widespread offensives and uprisings which marked a decisive turning in the fight against US imperialism, for national salvation in South Viet Nam.

The second Convention of the Alliance held on July 30 and 31, 1968 approved without a dissentient voice its political platform which re-affirmed its position expounded in its April 20, 1968 Manifesto and favoured " the union of all patriotic forces and individuals irrespective of ethnic origin, political conviction, religious creed and social background, in the present fight for national independence and sovereignty as well as in the eventual national reconstruction. As regards units and individuals belonging to the Saigon army and administration, the programme specified that "they would be warmly welcome and rewarded in accordance with their services" and that " those who have committed crimes against the people but show repentance and go over in all sincerity to latter's side would benefit from clemency. "

The two patriotic fronts' identity of views and close co-operation produced remarkable results and lead to the convening of the historic June 1969 Congress of the South Vietnamese People's Representatives, who passed the South Viet Nam pre-constitution fundamental resolution and appointed the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Viet Nam assisted by an Advisory Council whose job was to counsel the PRG and hold consultations with it " whenever there is a major decision to take on important problems facing the country."

Dr Trinh Dinh Thao, Chairman of the Central Committee of the Alliance was named vice-chairman of the Advisory Council while others of its leaders joined the PRG, like Dr Duong Quynh Hoa.

In the following years, the role of the Alliance in the national effort kept growing ceaselessly. Dr Trinh Dinh Thao's good will visits to many European socialist countries helped bring closer the latter's peoples and the South Vietnamese and the Vietnamese people.

Part of the credit for the Paris Agreement on Ending the War and Restoring Peace in Viet Nam went to the Alliance who had done its appreciable bit in bringing it about.

Due to its contacts with, and persuasion work among, South Vietnamese townsfolk, the Alliance will certainly have to play a significant part in the struggle for the realization of national reconciliation and concord, for the enforcement of democratic freedoms in Saigon-controlled areas and for the formation of the National Council of National Reconciliation and Concord of equal tripartite membership, which is to organize free and democratic general elections in South Viet Nam, under Article 12 of the Paris Agreement.

IN five years of intensive and fruitful patriotic activity, the Alliance has gone down in the history of South Viet Nam's national liberation. We are happy to convey to it our warmest greetings for its Fifth Founding Anniversary and wishes for new and signal successes in the battle for the full implementation of the Paris Agreement and for the shaping of an independent, free, peaceful and prosperous South Viet Nam and for the eventual and gradual peaceful reunification of the land.

SOUTH VIET NAM In Struggle

PRG military delegation welcomed by liberated townsfolk

Saigonese and national concord

SINCE the cease-fire, the nation's tremendous victory, has come into effect, the population in the liberated zone have set about building a truly free life in the spirit of national concord. Enmity aroused by the enemy has gradually made room for mutual affection and solicitude among fellow-country-men resolved to shape a new life in their hamlets and villages. Moving scenes of reconciliation have been witnessed everywhere.

Peace and national reconciliation and concord are overriding preoccupations of all South Viet Nam cities' social sections, religious communities and ages. Since the signing of the Paris Agreement, they have been the topic of exchanges everywhere, among prison mates, armymen and civil servants of the Saigon regime.

As soon as the peace accord came into force, Saigonese took to the streets and called on the military not to shoot at their fellow-citizens. "Now that peace has been restored, we must achieve national concord" they said. "Throw off your rifles and go back to your native villages." In the liberated zone, the revolutionary power takes good care of the mercenary soldiers' families.

Those who have been arbitrarily jailed pin high hopes on the Agreement. The 29 students and pupils kept at the Chi Hoa detention centre expressed "hope that with the triumph of a new spirit, that of national reconciliation and concord, of ending all enmity and making peace, a line agreed to by the parties concerned," they would soon be returned to their families and schools.

The American imperialists and their protégé Nguyen Van Thieu are out of touch with the fondest feelings of the South Vietnamese people who cannot stand idly before the massacre of their sons and daughters. Toward the close of 1972 when the US Air Force savagely struck at the DRVN capital, an American newspaper printed the picture of a certain Bach Tuyet with a broad smile above this caption: "To have peace, bomb Hanoi." A group of pupils in the Mekong delta sent the woman artist, made more notorious by her behaviour, an open letter in a Saigon daily, saying in part: "Once again, just once again, turn round and look at the facts to know where exactly is located Hanoi and who are living in that city. Are they living on Vietnamese soil, possessed of a four-thousand-year civilization? While the history lesson about a mother with a hundred children and about our ancestors is still worth learning, how can the sons and daughters of this land so quickly forget about their forefathers?" Obviously, the letter was a relevant reminder not only for Bach Tuyet but for all those who are going astray from the right path.

"The Vietnamese people cherish peace" the paper *Tin Sang* commented in its April 4 issue, "but will be very stern with those who challenge the national conscience and are so heartless as to sabotage peace, national reconciliation and concord."

Facing Nguyen Van Thieu's obstination, condoned by the US administration, in arousing hatred and animosity, and liquidating physically all those who are for peace and reconciliation, wide segments of Saigonese, either individually or through their organizations, have raised their voices. Thirty in all, these include cultural, political, social and professional ones, among which the Committee for a Better Detention Regime in South Viet Nam, the People's Front to Secure Peace, the City's (Saigon) Thirty-Six Markets' Vendors' Union, etc. All of them stressed that,

— after many years of bloody fighting, national concord and the ending of feuds in Viet Nam is a most important and urgent demand,

— national reconciliation and concord will only materialize if the parties to the Paris Agreement immediately carry into effect the release of the civilian personnel taken into custody because of their militating for peace and justice.

In a declaration, the People's Front for Peace unequivocally reiterated its position and one of its objectives, namely, the total withdrawal of US troops and its allies' from South Viet Nam, and the achieving of peace on the basis of respect for the South Vietnamese people's right to self-determination and in the spirit of national reconciliation.

In spite of Thieu's clamour for war and orders for massacres, "the South Vietnamese people, who have made great sacrifices to forge ahead and defend their life in a large-scale war, will readily engage in a political struggle to attain their objectives — peace, independence, freedom and democracy" (*Dong Phuong*, a Saigon newspaper, March 15).

Now that the peace accord has been signed and all US troops must pull out, this old Saigon taxi-driver's thought is everyone's: "Once the Americans have gone home, there will remain but Vietnamese, and talks among them will be easy after all." Dealing with the situation in Saigon after the US pull-out the *Dien Tin* wrote: "The release of the last American POWs marks the strict implementation of the Paris Agreement. Today Saigon once more changes but for the better, in such a way as brings it closer to the nation. Saigon is rid of the shadows of swaggering GIs who formerly roamed about its streets arm in arm with Saigonese girls. Its streets are empty of allied soldiers; its tall buildings, still surrounded by barbed wire entanglements, are left without sentries. Today Saigon begins to recover the vitality of yore after long years of war."

A teacher, Huynh Van Tong, wrote: "More than ever, as Vietnamese, we should put firm confidence in our nation; let us look at the present to gain self-confidence and confidence in our nation, to pride ourselves upon our nation and upon what our nation has achieved all through the historical process since the Kings Hung created our country, national heroes Tran Hung Dao, Le Loi and Quang Trung defended it, up to this day. Undaunted Vietnamese, look up and march ahead."

A Saigonese professor wrote in the March 29 issue of the *Dien Tin* as follows: "To achieve a lasting peace, it is imperative to realize national reconciliation and concord. This is the only right way for our people. In fact, national reconciliation and concord is a reality resulting from a remarkable policy and a factual approach which make it possible for each Vietnamese to live a peaceful life amidst the national community. In the history of our struggle, our ancestors came to know that to combat natural calamities it was necessary to achieve national concord and unite the nation...; we must do our utmost to bridge the gap separating us, make mutual concessions, get together and live in concord in the affection of the Fatherland... We may differ in our thinking, opinions and habits, but share the same aspiration which is: peace, independence and freedom."

The people of South Viet Nam continue their advance, confident of their future:

A bright future can be seen in the present
The storm gone, the sun shines again, resplendent,
In liberty we sing and laugh
Peace and independence fill everyone with joy.
Viet Nam's rivers and mountains
Will live in peace, happiness and infinite love:
A new, more beautiful life has begun.

Rehabilitation and development of production

In spite of innumerable strictures of the Saigon administration, thousands upon thousands of families rebelled in Thua Thien province, Central and Southern Trung Bo and thoughout Nam Bo. They dismantled "strategic hamlets" and concentration zones and went back to their native places in the liberated areas. There they received from the help of their fellow citizens money, building materials, farming and other implements, which has enabled them to have new dwellings and earn their living without difficulty. They are taking part in production now in full swing almost everywhere.

Ben Tre: The area under rice growing has increased by 7,700 hectares as compared with last year. Of this figure 4,800 hectares are two-crop land. 10,000 hectares under fruit trees have been recovered and animal husbandry pushed ahead.

My Tho: More than 50 miles of canals have been repaired and the arable acreage maintained despite adverse bombings and shellings and encroaching operations. Thanks to improved farming methods, rice productivity in some places of Kien Van district has gone up — from six to eight tons per hectare,

Tra Vinh: In February and March, 270 families, including those who had destroyed "strategic hamlets", returned to their native villages. In Can Long district where a number among them had resettled, they participated in rice farming. At present they are carrying out a new sowing drive using 140 tons of seeds, and sharing in the harvest of an extracrop on about 100 hectares with their fellow-villagers.

Ca Mau: The people's revolutionary power has distributed more than 700 hectares of ricefields to those who left Saigon's concentration zones for the liberated areas of the province. With a view to expanding short-duration crops, local peasants in Tran Van Thoi district shared 28 tons of seeds to be sown on 10,000 hectares.

Vinh Long: In the two districts of Tam Binh and Binh Minh 44 small dams and over 50 culverts have been built for the irrigation of nearly 7,000 hectares of ricefields.

Quang Tri: In less than two months after the cease-fire, the provincial industrial and commercial services have provided effective help to the rehabilitation of handicrafts necessary to production and everyday life such as the blacksmith's trade, mat-making... They also helped the administrations of Gio Linh, Cam Lo, Trieu Phong and Hai Lang

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One man's

For 115 years, this was the first time not a single aggressor was left in our beloved land of Viet Nam. Like the press in the liberated areas and throughout the world, the Saigon papers abundantly commented on this historical event:

The withdrawal ceremony

"At 1:15 p.m., at the US command HQ, General Weyand and Ambassador Bunker attended the flag lowering ceremony after eleven years of US presence in Viet Nam. At that function, the American Ambassador virtually made no declaration. As he was standing near General Weyand, tears seemed to be welling up in his eyes."

Farewell

Under the headline "An international day," a paper wrote: "The last Americans have left and they will probably never think of returning in their army uniforms... The nightmare experienced by the US for ten long years has ended without any people wishing to recall it to mind. And the general in command told the last Americans or rather himself: We have achieved peace with honour. The MACV set up in 1962 was dissolved on March 29 at 1:20 p.m. The last commander "dismissed" his men and shook hands with the last Americans coming to see him off, saying: "This is a long wished-for day."

The lesson taught by the paper article is: "The Viet Nam war squandered not only the blood and money of the Americans; in many other respects, it drove them mad. It is also for them a precious lesson: Never to reiterate the mistake; to get involved but in a limited way. If you do not try to save yourselves, we cannot save you."

Thieu's "Democratic Party"

No wonder that when the Americans were packing up, Thieu hurriedly summoned a congress of the "Democratic Party" bossed by himself. Under the title "Merry-go-round," the *Dai Dan Toc* wrote sarcastically: "The President's Democratic Party held its congress at the Rex movie-theatre, then a presentation ceremony at the 'Republican' foot-ball ground. In two days, that political activity caught the attention of all Saigon, especially during the rush hours when the Democratic Party leaders were moving about under the protection of traffic policemen. Up to now there have been many political parties set up in our country but none of them has been inaugurated with such a pageantry."

Hinting that Thieu's party is almost a carbon

Two months after the Paris Agreement coming into effect

A new life in the liberated zone

districts and Dong Ha town in the opening of another 52 retailer shops selling over 200 kinds of goods for consumption and production, as well as in the rehabilitation of 8 large markets and the buying by the State of goods made by the population. Meanwhile thousands of people, hundreds of Vanguard Youth members and transport and communication teams have been busy filling bomb craters and repairing roads and bridges to restore traffic to normal and facilitate the movement of the population from one place to another.

Promotion of information and cultural work

Cultural, educational and medical work have been stepped up throughout the zone under the PRG control. The objective is to rapidly eliminate the social evils, step by step neutralize the noxious influence of the US-dominated Saigon regime's reactionary, enslaving and depraving culture, and promote a new and healthy way of life.

Braving no mean difficulties, central and regional dance and song ensembles and projection teams have been touring urban, lawland and highland regions. Songs and films with a wholesome content and good artistic standard have been highly appreciated.

In Quang Da and Binh Dinh provinces (Trung Bo) theatrical troupes gave well over a hundred performances. Exhibitions drew 40,000 and film shows 83,400 visitors.

The attendances recorded by Central Nam Bo ensembles surpassed the million mark. The cultural service of My Tho province entertained 40,000 people in 50 shows, and 50,000 in exhibitions on the armed forces' and people's achievements. In Tra Vinh, Can Tho and Vinh Long provinces and some of Western Nam Bo, several ensembles appeared before 60,000 people in nearly 100 places. Roving projection teams catered for more than 16,000 spectators of all ages.

While the Saigon administration had been trying to misrepresent the Paris Agreement as "only a cease-fire in place and no peace", the Information and Cultural Ministry of the PRG distributed more than 10 million copies of the Accord and its Protocols, and the related appeal of the National Front for Liberation and the Provisional Revolutionary Government. At the same time, its provincial services did their best to propagate the real purport of the agreement in leaflets, photographs, posters and local newspapers. In Baria, Long Khanh and Binh Long (East Nam Bo) over 170,000 copies of the Paris Agreement and its Protocols, and 21,500 placards were disseminated.

More schools built

Educational work has been also intensified by the people's power. Under its direct guidance, great efforts have been exerted to open new schools and classes for both children and grown-ups. Provincial educational services inaugurated hundreds of classes for the training of cadres and teachers, and complementary classes for children of families credited with distinguished services to the revolution. Meanwhile new textbooks have been printed, and measures taken to help teachers from the Saigon regime's schools to grasp the PRG's revolutionary educational line. In many provinces such as Quang Tri, Quang Ngai, My Tho, Kien Tuong, classes have been held for exchanging experience in the elemination of the aftermaths of depraving culture in the liberated zone.

All districts and villages of Quang Tri and Thua Thien have their own general-education schools. Gio Linh district, Quang Tri, possesses an elementary school, and 400 teachers for children and grown-ups.

A school has lately started functioning in Central Trung Bo to train teachers for elementary schools in the plains. Binh Dinh province boasts 8 complementary schools with 18 class-rooms and 330 pupils. It has so far graduated 664 primary and elementary school teachers.

The educational movement has made headway in the hills as well. In one village of Vinh Thanh district, Binh Dinh, there are 17 classes for 148 pupils. The Three Mountain districts of Khanh Hoa are among those which have scored fairly good successes in this field. 75 per cent of Vinh Son's hamlets have done away with illiteracy.

In Central Nam Bo, nearly 200 schools and classes were opened in twenty days—8 teachers' training classes in My Tho province alone, whose Cai Be, Cai Lay and urban districts have built 27 class-rooms for almost 1,000 pupils.

In Western Nam Bo, derelict schools have been restored and new ones built. Can Tho and Tra Vinh have 203 new ones for 15,400 children, and in the latter province alone where there exist a sizeable Khmer community, the people's power has built several establishments for Cambodian pupils. In some areas of Western Nam Bo, the school population has tripled in the last two months.

Better medicare for the people

Continuing its traditional war time dedication to the masses, the medical branch has assumed its peace time task with a new zeal.

In Quang Tri and Thua Thien sanitarians go down to the villages to show people how to prevent and treat themselves diseases likely to prevail in the coming summer months. Together with the people, they repair wells in bad condition or dig new ones, and clean up market places in and around population centres.

The medical network of Central Trung Bo has reached down to the hamlet level. 60 per cent of the districts have doctors, 50 per cent of the hamlets have medical workers. Over 100 freshly graduated medical and pharmaceutical attendants have been sent to various localities.

In Southern Trung Bo, half of the villages possess their own medicine chests, virtually all of hill villages and a number of lowland villages have medical workers.

According to incomplete statistics, in two months, Central Nam Bo medical workers provided medical care to 75,000 people, and attended to and delivered some 10,000 pregnant women. Under the guidance of provincial medical committees, medical workers and first-aiders have been trained, medical brigades and village and hamlet teams set up. Thousands and thousands of families possess medicine chests and are taught prophylatic methods. The Central Trung Bo Medical Service has produced various kinds of tonics and anti-venomous vaccine.

The West Nam Bo branch of the Medical Complementary School for the training of doctors from medical workers specializing in internal medicine and pediatrics has lately wound up another course: 70 per cent of the graduates got A grading. Also in West Nam Bo, a course has recently been started in Soc Trang province to increase the number of Cambodian medics. Three others to train attendants from 100 nurses and midwives have come to a close in Ca Mau. In Tra Vinh, 13,000 people were given Filatov grafts among them 1,500 of the Cambodian community and 200 from Saigon-controlled areas.

THE activities undertaken with a high sense of urgency in the past two months under the leadership of the South Viet Nam National Front for Liberation and the Provisional Revolutionary Government have won promising initial successes. They have brought notable changes in the liberated zone, thereby contributing to the safeguard of peace, promotion of reconciliation and concord, and eventual creation of a new, truly free life the South Vietnamese people.

weal is another man's woe

paper of Ngo Dinh Diem's "Personalist Worker's Party," the same paper warned under the headline "View point": "Impossible to return to the days of the First Republic with millions of Republican Youth Union members donning blue uniforms which painted all the town blue without however finding a finger raised or a word uttered for the Diem brothers on their last legs. This must be the writing on the wall for many a people."

The remaining Americans

The *Stars and Stripes* is still flying at Tan Son Nhut on top of the *Oriental Pentagon* (HQ of the US command in Saigon) because it is the office of the Military attaché of the US Embassy.

"According to official figures, up to Sunday April 1, there remained in South Viet Nam only 209 American militarymen (50 military attachés and 159 leather-necks detailed for guard-duty at the US Embassy and dependent services). Those who have a retentive memory would say: "This figure should only be found in Viet Nam as far back as 1951. The Saigon press revealed that apart from tens of thousands of American militarymen who have changed their army uniforms for civvies," there are demobbed GIs who stay in Viet Nam to earn a living like other foreign residents with the exception that they enjoy great privileges: they are free to move throughout Southeast Asia without passports: the only paper they carry, issued by the American authorities, is credentials showing that they are not militarymen." In fact a modus vivendi signed between South Viet Nam (read Saigon) and the US defers their demobilization in the US and allows them to return to South Viet Nam under the usual immigration regulations. The problem now is that they are getting the jobs of the natives, do not pay taxes, are not easy to control and chiefly very difficult to manage. When will that privilege called "gratitude towards the US army" come to an end?"

Freedom of the Vietnamese

While the Americans enjoy such a freedom, the Vietnamese living in their own land are not free to move about, to return to their ricefields and to speak up their minds. The *Dai Dan Toc* disclosed that the Saigon authorities had given orders to take "new photographs of all people throughout the country in order to keep them more tightly under their sway, this at the exorbitant price of 350 piastres per set of three photos." Though gagged, the Saigon press is able to speak out the deep aspirations of the 'majority of people who long to return to their native places.' Under such headlines as 'Resurrected Viet Nam' and 'Days of Upheaval', these papers wrote that the desire to see again their land and people is so keen that the refugees return home in a hurry; but they are on tenterhooks, not at peace." These papers wonder whether, under US bombings, those people can materialize their dream:

To leave the city with its glamour, to return home,
To suck the fresh milk of the mother country,
To bathe in the silt-carrying river and let bygones be bygones,
To make a green spring and weave the thread of love,
To welcome Tet in the bosom of the native soil
And see the sun rays flooding the thatched hut

Return all captured and detained civilian personnel now

THE Agreement on Ending the War and Restoring Peace in Viet Nam has stipulated that the question of the return of the Vietnamese civilian personnel captured and detained in South Viet Nam will be settled by the two South Vietnamese parties in a spirit of national reconciliation and concord, with a view to ending hatred and enmity, in order to ease suffering and to reunite families.

60 days have elapsed, but Saigon supported by the USA has not returned to the Provisional Revolutionary Government a single civilian captured and detained by it. It has moreover resorted to every crafty trick to postpone the operation, and murder patriots and those who have at heart peace and national reconciliation and concord. This has been strongly condemned by public opinion at home and abroad.

Saigon is by nature a stubborn, bellicose, dictatorial and fascist regime. It has built thousands of jails and prisons in the areas under its control where hundreds of thousands of patriots and those who love peace and approve of national reconciliation and concord are still detained and ruthlessly victimized. The PRG has been insistently urging that the Saigon authorities, in strict implementation of the Paris Agreement, return the civilian personnel captured and detained by it, but this demand and public pressure at home and abroad only resulted in the release of 5,081 men and women described as PRG civilian personnel. This figure is completely at variance with the truth. The 040/TTGH/CS/CD/I report covering the period between 07: 00 hours February 19, 1973 to 07: 00 hours February 20, 1973 sent by the Board of Directors of the Con Son jail to the Board of Directors of the Saigon Centre of Reeducation admitted that the total of prisoners in the Con Son jail was 9,850, with the following breakdown :

— men : 5,622 serving their sentences, 74 suspects, 3,096 under preventive detention.

— women : 339 serving their sentences, 99 suspects, 620 under preventive detention.

By the end of November 1972, Hoang Duc Nha, a close adviser of Nguyen Van Thieu, declared : "In the last weeks of November 1972 alone, the number of people arrested and sentenced rose to 45,000..." He admitted that these were jailed on political grounds. This provided a clear proof of the Saigon administration's efforts to conceal the exact number of political prisoners with a view to dodging their return stipulated by Article 8c of the Paris Agreement.

The world has ever since been aware of the utterly inhumane penitentiary regime of the Saigon administration. The "tiger cages" at Con Son, the Cay Dua jail in Phu Quoc, Chi Hoa jail in Saigon are real hells on earth which public opinion at home and abroad has stigmatized more than once. At the first session, on Feb. 24, 1973 of the Four - Party Joint Military Commission in Saigon, the PRG Military Delegation trenchantly refuted the figures produced by the Saigon side, and as a result the Saigon Military Delegation had to recognize that the figure of 5,081 civilians captured and detained it had advanced was by no means a fixed one. Nevertheless, it is still stubbornly clinging to it, in an effort to keep hundreds of thousands of patriots it has been keeping and torturing for so many years. For it is a fact that the Saigon administration is still holding and torturing innumerable civilians in its 1,000-odd jails throughout South Viet Nam. It is trying to liquidate them, change them from political into common law prisoners, fake sentences on them, take a great number of them to unknown destinations, force others to sign prepared documents representing them as "turn-coats," release them in an illegal way or else stage arbitrary trials against them...

On March 21, 1973, the Saigon authorities openly held a session of their Military Court right in the Con Son jail, and in one day pronounced sentences on 240 people. As the prisoners fought for a visit by the International Commission, they were ruthlessly dealt with by the warders who killed and wounded a great number of them.

At the Phu Quoc jail, the warders recently did their best to mix political prisoners with others ; they did away with a number of the former and sent all considered by them as "leaders" to C.8, a quarter reserved for confinement. At the end of December, the prisoners detained at C.8 totalled 452 people, but their figure rose to 600 at mid-March 1973 and none among them was returned.

Captain Hung, of the psywar security force, once declared to C.8 inmates : "You will be disposed of at the right moment... "

It is crystal-clear that the Saigon administration has been nurturing a scheme to do away with political prisoners. Meanwhile round-ups, arrests and terror are going on, which swells the ranks of patriots, peace- and national concord-loving people in prisons of the Saigon regime. This in its turn leads to an aggravation of the tension in Saigon-controlled areas. All democratic liberties are slighted, the people's right to live most seriously threatened.

It is a consistent policy of the PRG to awaken people to the justice of the revolutionary cause. Education and persuasion is used vis-à-vis those who were led astray. Even those who have committed heinous crimes are only *temporarily* held for education, then sent back to their families. Members of the Saigon army who have taken up arms against their own people also benefit from the leniency prescribed in the 10-point policy issued by the PRG. To mislead public opinion, the Saigon administration has recently forged varying figures — now 59,000, now 6,000 — of civilian personnel of its side allegedly detained by the PRG from whom it demands their return. This is another manoeuvre aimed at covering its own fascism and putting the blame on the PRG, while shirking the total return of PRG civilian personnel, patriots and peace-lovers who are still languishing in its jails. But nobody is to be deceived by this only too crude manoeuvre.

Everybody knows that in the first 60 days of the implementation of the Paris Agreement the PRG handed back to the US side 127 US military personnel and foreign civilians, and to the Saigon administration 5,433 military personnel.

Four-Party Joint Military teams and International teams present at ceremonies all recorded that everything had been done smoothly, and the organization had been meticulously conform to procedural rules and accurately performed. Released US military personnel and foreign civilians expressed their gratitude for the generous and humane treatment they had received from the PRG. Reversely in the same period, the Saigon administration ceaselessly created difficulties to prisoner-returning operations, it even indulged in attacks against localities accepted by the Four-Party Joint Military Commission for those operations. Most of the military personnel handed over by the Saigon administration to the PRG were invalids as a result of torture inflicted upon them by the wicked warders of US-Thieu prisons.

The release of detained patriots and peace-lovers is a matter of great urgency and paramount importance for the realization of national concord, ending of hatred and enmity, achieving of democratic liberties in South Viet Nam and strict implementation of the Paris Agreement on Ending the War and Restoring Peace. In purposedly delaying it, the US and Saigon administration are seriously breaking the Paris Agreement. This shows that they are bent on maintaining in South Viet Nam a dictatorial, fascist regime and opposing peace national concord and the aspirations of the South Viet amese people and peace-loving people all over the world. Nguyen Van Thieu, an efficient tool of US neo-colonialism and mini-dictator, is relying upon his Yankee masters and rushing headlong into an abyss of crimes against the Fatherland and the Nation.

The South Vietnamese people forcefully denounce his moves and acts and insist that he immediately stop all violence to the life and limb, in particular the murders and outrages against the personal dignity, of captured and detained civilian personnel, under the terms of the Paris Agreement. It must communicate to the PRG complete lists of this civilian personnel and return them without delay in accordance with the letter and spirit of the said Agreement.

When are these political detainees unfettered ?

Photo from the magazine Asahi

Letter from disabled prisoners of Poulo Condor

South Viet Nam, February 20, 1973

To the International Commission of Control and Supervision, Bien Hoa,
To the Commission of Prisoners,

Sirs,

We, patriots militating for the peace, independence, neutrality, democracy and self-determination of South Viet Nam and eventual reunification of our country, were arrested, tortured, detained and deported by the Saigon authorities. We languished in the prisons of South Viet Nam for years, particularly in Con Son (Poulo Condor island) jail where many of our countrymen met their death. Most of the survivors, like the 124 of us are disabled. We all are seriously ill, affected by serious diseases such as heart or liver troubles, stomachache or tuberculosis... Moreover, we were harshly treated when we were confined in "tiger cages" or "ox cages."

On the night of February 16, 1973, the prison authorities drove us out of the new "tiger cages" dubbed Camp 7 of Con Son into places in the General Police Headquarters of the Third Zone (Bien Hoa province) where they secretly set us free by leaving us in groups of three or five in Bien Hoa, Phuoc Tuy, Long An and Hau Nghia provinces and other places.

Legally they were bound to provide us with transport facilities to return home. But they forbade us to go back to our native villages, especially Saigon, Cholon and Gia Dinh. At present, despite our so-called freedom, we enjoy no safety, on the contrary our life is ceaselessly jeopardized by harsh security measures imposed by the Saigon authorities.

After 17 or 18 years of separation, our only wish is to join our families. Unfortunately, we are forced to drag our invalid bodies about in places of exile. Our most earnest desire is peace, independence and freedom. That is why we were overjoyed at the news of the restoration of peace in our country, at the signing of the Agreement on Ending the War on January 27, 1973 in Paris, as well as at the provisions aimed at achieving peace, coalition, neutrality and national concord in South Viet Nam.

We support the presence of the International Commission of Control and Supervision in Viet Nam and in Indochina. We are ready to forget all our sufferings in the past. We support any individual or organisation which contributes to maintaining peace in Viet Nam under the Paris Agreement. For these reasons, in face of the inconceivable attitude of the Saigon authorities towards hundreds of thousands of prisoners still held in the prisons in South Viet Nam, we send you this letter to draw your attention to our following legitimate and urgent demands :

1 — The ICCS teams and the Commission of Prisoners in the above-mentioned provinces conduct an investigation and intercede with the Saigon administration for us to join our families and be provided with care for our condition, and guarantees of safety ;

2 — The ICCS and the Commission of Prisoners intercede with the Saigon administration to put an end to all its harsh measures and improve at once the living conditions of the prisoners. Most urgent to all, the prisoners must be supplied with adequate food, and released in conformity with the Paris Agreement ;

3 — The Saigon administration allow us to meet the members of the ICCS teams and the Commission of Prisoners at an appointed place in Bien Hoa province, so that we can tell them what we have witnessed and experienced ourselves.

Finally, we hope that in the name of the two commissions and for the sake of peace, independence and freedom of the Vietnamese people, you will take necessary steps so that our hope will be soon realized.

Signed

124 disabled prisoners of Con Son prison transfered to Bien Hoa on February 16, 1973.

Prompt release of South Vietnamese patriots urged

IN the world peoples' support Viet Nam movement for the US and Saigon full respect and strict implementation of the Paris Agreement, one of the concerned issues is the Thieu regime's continued detention and liquidation with American connivance, of political prisoners in South Viet Nam.

The problem was raised in the appeal of the Committee of Lawyers for Peace in France on March 9 ; national concord and reconciliation in South Viet Nam cannot be achieved so long as military and civilian personnel are still detained by the Saigon side. The latter is not only illtreating detainees but also scheming to liquidate them... The struggle for the return of the captured civilian personnel is the same as that for the observance of the Paris Agreement and for peace in Viet Nam.

Earlier, the International Emergency Conference on Viet Nam held in Rome from February 22 to 24 had adopted a resolution making clear that there must be regular and continuous demonstration in front of Saigon and US Embassies for the release of persons still under detention in South Viet Nam and for democratic liberties for the South Vietnamese.

Buddhists, students, professors, intellectuals, and professional people, b) arbitrarily renamed political prisoners as common criminals in order to prevent their release, c) continued to systematically torture and keep prisoners in subhuman conditions, including tiger-cages, and even murdered prisoners — all in violation of the 1949 Geneva Convention concerning Civilian Rights in wartime, the 1948 Declaration of Human Rights, and the Nuremberg Charter.

The letter of the Council of Christian Youth and the Free Church Youth Organisation in Sweden to Nixon pointed out : "There are now hundreds of thousands of political prisoners in South Viet Nam jails. Under the terms of the Peace Agreement, they must be freed... According to reliable sources, savage torture and ill treatment are routine in those prisons. Recently, there have been indications that the Saigon administration is seeking to get rid of the prisoners in a systematic manner." The letter also underlined the responsibility of the US government for the release of political prisoners, and said that as it has supported the Saigon regime ever since, it must be held responsible for the fate of the detainees.

Responding to the call, positive actions have taken place in various countries : demonstrations in front of the Saigon Embassy in London, of the State Department in Washington, in New York, mass meetings in Stockholm, Oslo. Meanwhile, Frenchmen and Frenchwomen, under the auspices of the Popular Relief Organisation, kept March 23 as "Action Day," to pressure the United States and the Saigon administration into freeing all political detainees. In the current "Action Week" organised by the Japanese people from March 22 to 28, the immediate and unconditional release of South Vietnamese patriots is one of the main objectives. In Italy, the Committee for the Rescue of Political Prisoners in South Viet Nam has been set up. Films on the brutalities in South Viet Nam prisons have been shown in Hungary and Sweden ; and the "United French Editors" have published a book entitled *Free from Saigon jails, We March Forward.* All these activities stigmatize the Saigon prison system, and call on the conscience of mankind to react against the dark deeds and designs endangering the life of hundreds of thousands of patriots in South VietNam.

In addition, many international or national organizations, mass organizations and the press in Britain, France, Sweden, Norway, the Soviet Union, Hungary, Czechoslovakia etc. have issued statements, written commentaries or sent petitions, messages or letters to Presidents Nixon and Thieu, to protest the cruelty of the Saigon side.

The 256 American intellectuals' petition said :

"We, the undersigned, as specialists on Asia, look upon the 1973 Paris Peace Agreement on Ending the War and Restoring Peace in Viet Nam as an important step towards achieving peace in Asia. We believe that Thieu's policy on political prisoners, which has US support, constitutes a fundamental violation of the Agreement and risks the resumption of war.

...According to Article 8 of the Agreement, arrangements concerning the release of political prisoners are to be made by April 27, 1973. However, not only has the Saigon administration taken no steps for their release, on the contrary, it has : a) imprisoned many more persons since the Agreement went into effect, including neutralists,

The statement of the Norway Support Viet Nam Committee wrote : "To date, there have been about 300,000 political prisoners in Saigon jails. Many have not only been maltreated and tortured but also secretly disposed of. We urge that the Saigon regime set them free."

The resolution of the Rome Conference stated : The detainees are cruelly tortured. Such atrocities are not only aimed at suppressing them physically but also vilifying them morally. Most of them have been classified as common law criminals so as to shirk the observance of the Paris Agreement on the guarantee of the political and civil rights, and on the return to the other side in South Viet Nam all those who have contributed, under any form, to the armed and political struggle between the two sides. This is an element of the genocide against the Vietnamese, a consistent policy under various forms. All these offences cannot take place without US approval and aid in credits, equipment and advisers.

The Hungarian paper *Nepsgava* (Voice of the People) noted on March 17 : "More barbarous still is that they (Washington and Saigon sides) continue detaining and killing civilian personnel captured during the war, thus seriously threatening the life of 300,000 prisoners in South Viet Nam. This is a violation of Article 8, Chapter 3, of the Paris Agreement, for which they must get the full blame..."

The Soviet Union's daily *Pravda* commented on March 17 : "By delaying the hand-over to the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Viet Nam the list of the patriots detained by them, and by secretly getting rid of their political opponents, the reactionaries are trying to weaken the democratic forces in South Viet Nam... The oppression by the Saigon administration of the detainees is a gross violation of the provisions on a political settlement to Viet Nam..."

"Together with progressive mankind," the paper continued, "the Soviet people firmly urge that the hands of hangmen who are now brutalizing the patriots held in South Viet Nam prisons and concentration camps be stayed. The prisoners must be released."

DINH BA

Viet Nam — Czechoslovakia friendship growing firmly

AT the invitation of the Standing Committee of the National Assembly of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam, a delegation of the Federal National Assemby of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic led by Alois Indra, member of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Czechslovak Communist Party, Chairman of the Federal National Assembly of the CSR, paid an official friendship visit to the DRVN from April 4 to 11, 1973.

The delegation of the Federal National Assembly of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic held talks with the Standing Committee of the National Assembly of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam. The Vietnamese delegation to the talks was headed by Truong Chinh, Chairman of the National Assembly Standing Committee.

The delegation called on the Special Representation of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Viet Nam in the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam.

The delegation attended a grand meeting of the Hanoi population in its honour, visited a number of economic, cultural and medical establishments in Hanoi, Haiphong and Quang Ninh and had many contacts with workers, peasants and combatants of the people's armed forces. The delegation had the opportunity to see the heavy aftermaths of the barbarous bombings by the US air force, and severely condemned those barbarous acts against the Vietnamese people.

The Party and State leaders of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam sincerely thank the Communist Party, the fraternal people of Czechoslovakia, for their valuable and effective support and assistance in the spirit of proletarian internationalism to the resistance against US aggression, for national salvation, and the socialist construction of the Vietnamese people. Together with the support and assistance of the other socialist countries, the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic has strongly encouraged the Vietnamese people in their fight, and contributed to their great victory.

The leaders of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam fully support the Czechoslovak people's legitimate demand that the Government of the German Federal Republic recognize the so-called Munich Treaty as illegal and null and void.

At the talks with the Standing Committee of the National Assembly of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam as well as the others, Chairman Alois Indra and other members of the Federal National Assembly of the CSR, highly valued the great victories recorded by the Vietnamese people, resolutely supported the Vietnamese just stand and vehemently condemned the US government and Saigon administration for their violations of the Paris Agreement on Viet Nam.

The communiqué of the visit of the delegation of the CSR FNA said :

" The two parties severely condemn the US government and Saigon administration for their deliberate, serious and systematic violations of the most important and imperative provisions of the Paris Agreement on Viet Nam, in contravention of the most earnest aspirations of the South Vietnamese people, namely peace, independence, democracy and national concord.

The Czechoslovak delegation asserts the principled stand of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic of resolutely supporting the Government of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam and the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Viet Nam in the struggle for the strict respect and scrupulous implementation of the Paris Agreement, for the maintenance of lasting peace, completion of independence and democracy in South Viet Nam in the advance toward the peaceful reunification of the country. Together with the other brother socialist countries, the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic pledges itself to give all-out assistance to the Vietnamese people in solving the aftermaths of war, rehabiliting the economy and building socialism in North Viet Nam.

The visit to the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam of the delegation of the Federal National Assembly of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic is a token of the fraternal friendship and militant solidarity between the Czechoslovak and Vietnamese peoples ended successfully."

A criminal and shameful tour

OF all the comments on Nguyen Van Thieu's "official visit" to the United States of America and some other countries, these commanded our attention :

From the background of the tour...

As is known to everybody, the Paris Agreement on Viet Nam has, among other things, resulted in a US solemn pledge to end all its involvement in South Viet Nam. And, under the Agreement, the US has just completed the withdrawal of all its troops and war material from South Viet Nam within sixty days after the signing of the Agreement. On the other hand, the Agreement has been time and again violated by the US-Thieu side, to various degrees of gravity. Needless to say that such deeds have been strongly condemned by world opinion.

...to the objectives

According to the West German *Frankfurter Rundschau* on April 9, the objective of Thieu's visit was to " blackmail the US government as well as its allies in Western Europe into giving him money. " The French paper *Le Monde* made a more caustic remark in an article on April 3, that Thieu was mainly seeking on his tour : " prestige, dollars and military commitments. " The US *International Herald Tribune* also editorially said on April 2 that Thieu's visit to the US was after a very definite aim : secure US military and economic aid.

In the USA, it was regarded as that of a beggar who sought to hoodwink the American people and that Thieu himself was "a beggar and a brigand" (Representative Don Edwards).

For more information, keep a close watch on the White House

Surely enough Thieu's antics were staged by Washington.

Le Figaro wrote on April 2 : " The presence of President Thieu on US soil was very typical of Mr Nixon's " Vietnamization. "

An article from the *Washington Post* reprinted by the April 4 issue of the *International Herald Tribune* said : While welcoming Thieu, President Nixon wants to tell other people that in his own eyes, the Agreement is but a fig-leaf the sole value of which was to cover up the withdrawal of the US from the hostilities. He also proves to Hanoi and Thieu's political opponents that Thieu is still in his good books, which as a result materializes not only in favorable political conditions but also in continuous economic aid, in the replacement of worn-out arms and in the diplomatic support which Thieu is the recipient.

The reaction of progressives in the countries visited by Thieu

For them, Thieu's presence in their countries was just " a brazen challenge to all democrats and progressives. " Consequently, he was met with a wave of protest wherever he went from the USA to Italy, from Great Britain to to West Germany. This powerful movement, which was versatile and vigorous, caused a big headache to the host authorities who had to muster a thousand-strong police force to see to his security and he was secretly whisked from one place to another in helicopters. People who were forced to receive him " at his own request " had to do so in places away from the capitals, such as the hunting lodge of the Italian President or at the country house of the British Prime Minister.

Thieu was called all sorts of names like : "a US puppet," " a fascist pig, " " a hangman, " " a dictator, " " a professional torturer, " " a dictator, terrorist and torturer. " People asked their governments " not to give money to killer Thieu and the US imperialists, " " to end all support and assistance to the Saigon regime and to urge it to release immediately all political prisoners still in Saigon's jails " and exposed Thieu's true nature as " a henchman of the US imperialism, " and his regime " a shaky and rotten one. "

Especially in Italy, a week before Thieu's visit and during his stay there, Italians, including many priests and members of the two Houses, organized meetings and demonstrations, published declarations, open letters and communiqués — all coming against his visit and against the Pope's decision to receive him. They denounced Thieu " as head of a police regime that is a servile tool of imperialism, " " his regime's violations of the Paris Agreement on Viet Nam, torturing and murders of patriots. " To express their strong feeling against his presence, they even mined the Saigon Embassy and the head-quarters of US Marines guarding the US Embassy in Rome. In West Germany, demonstrators also stormed a US Cultural Centre in Heidelberg and threw stones at the Bonn City-Hall, "an unprecedented event in the whole history of West German capital " *(AFP)*.

Thieu's tour and the South Vietnamese

For the South Vietnamese it was that of a traitor to his country. It only proved that the Saigon administration could not survive without the continuous support of the US imperialists who fathered it. While the overwhelming majority of the people of South Viet Nam were rejoicing at the sight of the last aggressor leaving their land, Thieu was, with his tour, re-acting the role of Vietnamese Benedict Arnolds like Tran Ich Tac, Le Duy Ky, Ngo Dinh Diem... He tries to legalize US involvement in South Viet Nam and goes on ravaging the country, killing his own people, thereby carrying out the US neo-colonialist scheme and hindering the implementation of the Paris Agreement on Viet Nam. What he has been doing runs counter to the most fervent aspiration of the people of South Viet Nam : enuine independence, real peace and national reconciliation and concord. The people of South Viet will not fail to put down Nguyen Van Thieu's new offence in his already too voluminous records as an infamous traitor to his country.

Now the results of his trip

As regards the Nixon-Thieu joint communiqué, the French paper *Le Figaro* reported on April 5 : " The joint communiqué is received here (in Saigon) with some disappointment." From the other countries, except for a " cold reception ", Thieu had obtained almost nothing.

But whatever the results, no other conclusion can be reached but this one : " It was a criminal tour full of shame. "

NHU NAM

From the " Observer "

Here and There

THICK AS THIEVES

Soon after the last GI left Viet Nam "to never return there," in principle, but not in the moving manner of brave Jing Ka of the past for the just cause of King Jin Jian, Thieu rushed in distress to the White House, clamouring that the latter would resume the bombing (of North Viet Nam) without waiting for Saigon's request. "Very good," commented condescendingly "King Richard" who bestowed on him a good accolade, not in Washington, the federal capital, but in San Clemente to stress his vassalage. That statement of his, as well as his assurances of loyalty and gratitude to the US metropolis, is reminiscent of his predecessor Ngo Dinh Diem's utterance about the extension of US boundaries to the 17th parallel.

After two days of back-patting and banqueting at the Richard Court, Thieu reiterated his allegiance in a joint communiqué, which was obviously a challenge to the Paris Agreement. After that he toured the world, Italy, England, West Germany and other lands, to boast of his diplomatic "gain" and beg for support and subsidies.

THE UNINVITED GUEST

Thieu's trip was chiefly done by airplane and helicopter even when the distance was only a walking one or a short drive. For security reason, to dodge the too uproarious and too warm demonstrations of the populations of the places on his route, ready to flood him with the usual gifts: tomatoes, rotten eggs and even other less innocuous things like Molotow cocktails, stones, grenades and what not. And he was received at sites rather unusual in diplomatic annals: hunting lodges, out-of-the-way villas a long way from great population centres. And the persons in attendance were not less unusual: deputy foreign ministers or other officials generally not assigned such a job. The reception was in general rather "cool," reported press agencies, in Rome, in Bonn and other places. And the duration of the interviews did not exceed 50 minutes.

But more amusement could be found in the banners and placards displayed in mass actions in the US and other countries, on the occasion of his visit: "Thieu, US puppet," "Down with executioner Thieu," "Thieu, a hideous dictator-torturer," "Kick Thieu out of Rome," "Bounce Thieu out of Bonn," "No support for Thieu from the FRG Government," "Release the political prisoners in South Viet Nam," "300,000 men are languishing in Thieu's jails"...

And the names he was called by various people of renown and democratic papers were no less colourful: beggar and bandit, seducer of the American people, tin-horn tyrant, war criminal, abject dictator, enemy of the South Vietnamese etc.

THE WORLD UPSIDE DOWN

Let us take a look at his declarations. On the prisoners' issue, for instance, which had stirred up so many clamours in the world, and to which Pope Paul VI himself drew his guest's attention. "On this matter, the president gave many details and data" (*AFP*, April 9).

Other statements made at a press conference in Rome or in Washington had nothing new in them.

In Rome he said: There are two sorts of prisoners in South Viet Nam: the common law offenders and the communists. The latter includes those who threw bombs into cinema halls, cut down civilians watching the television, hurled explosive into schools and pagodas. They number 5,081. Communist claims that there are 200,000 of them are lies, downright lies (*UPI*, April 4).

In a television interview in Washington, he called liars those who say that the prisoners are submitted to an inhuman treatment in the so-called tiger cages in Poulo Condor. He more particularly aimed at two French newspapermen who told a tale of horrors after nearly two years of detention in the island's jail. Thieu affirmed they were communists (*Reuter*, April 8, 1973).

All lies and lies, these testimonies of South Vietnamese prisoners returned to the PRG, with their bodies wasted or maimed, these skeletons buried under the levelled ground of Poulo Condor, a tissue of lies, the truth itself.

Oh Aesop, you who knew what a tongue is like!

HUONG NAM

Warmly welcome
Samdech Norodom Sihanouk's historic trip

In Camboaia's liberated area: Samdech Head of State Norodom Sihanouk presiding over a session of the Council of the Royal Government of National Union of Kampuchea

At the invitation of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam, Samdech Norodom Sihanouk, Head of State of Cambodia, Chairman of the National United Front of Kampuchea (NUFK) and Princess Monique Sihanouk, paid a state visit to the DRVN after their trip to the liberated areas of Cambodia. Accompanying them was Mr Ieng Sary, special envoy of the NUFK home branch and of the Royal Government of National Union of Cambodia (RGNUC).

During their stay in Hanoi, Samdech Head of State Norodom Sihanouk and his suite visited a missile launching site, the Bach Mai hospital and some localities hard hit by American planes.

Mr Le Duan, Mr Truong Chinh and Premier Pham Van Dong paid a courtesy call to the Cambodian Head of State and Princess Monique Sihanouk and requested them to convey their respectful wishes to Queen Sisovath Kossamak for her 70th birthday.

They also called on Samdech Penn Nouth, Cambodian Prime Minister coming to Hanoi to welcome Samdech Norodom Sihanouk.

On April 9, 1973, the President of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam, Ton Duc Thang, gave at the Presidential Palace a State banquet in honour of Samdech Norodom Sihanouk, Head of State of Cambodia and his party.

President Ton Duc Thang, Chairman Truong Chinh, Premier Pham Van Dong together with Samdech Head of State Norodom Sihanouk, and Princess Monique Sihanouk, Samdech and Mrs Penn Nouth, Mr Ieng Sary and the other Cambodian guests toasted the success of Samdech Norodom Sihanouk's visit to the liberated areas of Cambodia, the health of Queen Sisovath Kossamak who was having her 70th birth anniversary, the everlasting fraternal militant solidarity between the peoples of Viet Nam and Cambodia, between the three Indochinese peoples, and the victory of the peoples of Viet Nam, Cambodia and Laos.

Premier Pham Van Dong and Samdech Head of State Norodom Sihanouk delivered speeches extolling the close militant solidarity and friendship between the Vietnamese people and the Khmer people. Their addresses were interrupted by loud applause.

In his speech, Premier Pham Van Dong said:

"The visit to the liberated zone of Samdech Head of State harmoniously coincided with the tremendous victory of the Cambodian people in all domains. These are the resounding exploits of the Cambodian combatants and people on all battle-fields, especially on the strategic communication lines, tightening the siege on the Phnom Penh capital. In the capital itself, various strata of the population have stood up to participate in varied forms in the indefectibly victorious struggle for national liberation. These exploits, added to the victories recorded on the diplomatic front, have driven the reactionary clique of Lon Nol deeper into a serious crisis and a position of irremediable collapse.

At this juncture, the war escalation of the US imperialists in Cambodia, the attacks by aircraft of all types including many B-52s, the piling of innumerable crimes against the Cambodian people have shown more clearly their position of weakness and defeat, and have aroused indignation among the Cambodian people who are intensifying their struggle and provoked a powerful wave of protest in the United States and the rest of the world.

This historic trip of Samdech Head of State constitutes a new and still more moving and vivid manifestation of the militant solidarity between the peoples of Cambodia and Viet Nam, two brothers, neighbours, comrades-in-arms who always fought side by side and are ready to give mutual wholehearted support and assistance.

The Vietnamese people will for ever keep a sincere and profound gratitude to Samdech Head of State and the Cambodian people who have accorded to their just cause a great and inestimable support and assistance. The Vietnamese people are determined to fulfill their obligation toward the fraternal Cambodia people, to unreservedly support the five-point Statement made on March 23, 1973 by Samdech Norodom Sihanouk, Head of State, the holder of the legality, authenticity and continuity of the Cambodian State. We are happier than ever to express to Samdech Head of State our unswerving position.

The successful visit of Samdech Head of State also contitutes a new demonstration of the fraternal friendship and militant solidarity binding the peoples of Viet Nam, Cambodian and Laos. Loyal to the Joint Declaration of the Indochinese peoples' Summit Conference, our three peoples will redouble efforts in the situation which remains very difficult and complex but also very encouraging due to its bright prospects, in order to bring into the fullest play their victorious and strong position. They will strengthen their solidarity and coordinate further their struggle with the resolve to record yet greater victories."

JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ

RSVN-USSR

According to GPA correspondent in Moscow, an RSVN—USSR joint communiqué has just been made public of the official friendship visit by the NFL and RSVN PRG delegation led by Mme Nguyen Thi Binh, member of the NFL Central Committee and Foreign Minister of the PRG.

The communiqué reads in full as follows :

AT the invitation of the Soviet Government, Madame Nguyen Thi Binh, member of the Central Committee of the South Viet Nam National Front for Liberation and Foreign Minister of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Viet Nam, headed a delegation comprising Messrs Dang Quang Minh, member of the South Viet Nam NFL Central Committee, RSVN Ambassador to the USSR, and Tran Van Tu, RSVN Ambassador to Poland, to pay an official visit to the USSR from March 26 to April 2, 1973.

During her stay in the USSR, at a grand ceremony held in the Kremlin, Mr N.V. Podgorny, President of the USSR Supreme Soviet, conferred the Soviet Order of Friendship among Nations on Madame Nguyen Thi Binh for her contribution to the consolidation of international solidarity among progressive, democratic and peace-loving forces and her fruitful activities to ensure peace in Viet Nam and unity of the patriotic forces in South Viet Nam, and on the occasion of International Women's Day. Madame Nguyen Thi Binh expressed her profound gratitude for the high appreciation of her activities through the conferment of the high Soviet Order and declared that she considered this as a reward reserved for the combatants and people of South Viet Nam.

During her stay in Moscow, Mme Nguyen Thi Binh and members of her delegation laid wreaths at the Lenin Mausoleum and the Unknown Soldiers Monument. The delegation visited Leningrad and many historical relics in the city. Everywhere, the RSVN delegates were warmly received by the Soviet people.

Also during her stay in the USSR, RSVN Foreign Minister Nguyen Thi Binh was received by Mr N.V. Podgorny, Political Bureau member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and President of the USSR Supreme Soviet. At the reception, Mme Nguyen Thi Binh handed the RSVN PRG's Statement on the implementation of the Paris Agreement in the past two months.

Mme Nguyen Thi Binh, member of the South Viet Nam National Front for Liberation Central Committee and Foreign Minister of the Republic of South Viet Nam, called on Mr B.N. Ponomaryov, alternate member of the Political Bureau and Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, and held talks with Mr A.A. Gromyko, Foreign Minister of the Soviet Union.

The meetings and talks took place in an atmosphere of fraternal friendship and mutual understanding. The two sides exchanged views on questions of common concern, including international issues. They showed particular concern for the situation in South Viet Nam.

The two sides unanimously confirmed that the Agreement on Ending the War and Restoring Peace in Viet Nam was, first of all, a victory of the heroic Vietnamese people who, had for many years overcome numerous difficulties and hardships and waged a persistent and staunch struggle against the US aggressors, in defense of their national rights. That is the outcome of the constructive policy of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Viet Nam—the sole legitimate representative of the aspirations of the South Vietnamese people—and of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam which has cleverly combined various forms of struggle, including armed, political and diplomatic struggles. That is also a great victory of the socialist countries, the national liberation movement and all peace-loving and progressive forces throughout the world, a victory of common sense and of a realistic attitude in solving international issues in the interests of peace and the right to self-determination of all nations. The two sides stressed that the restoration of peace in Viet Nam which responds to the fundamental national rights of the Vietnamese people and the right to self-determination of the South Vietnamese people, had made an effective contribution to the defense of peace in Southeast Asia and the world, and to the improvement of relations among all countries.

Refering to the current situation in Viet Nam, the two sides agreed that at present the key question is the strict and scrupulous implementation of all the provisions of the Paris Agreement and its Protocols.

The Soviet side warmly welcomes and supports the goodwill and correct stand of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Viet Nam and the Government of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam in strictly respecting and scrupulously implementating the Paris Agreement on Viet Nam.

Both sides note that a number of provisions of the Agreement are being carried out for instance: troops of the US and of its allies are withdrawing from South Viet Nam, the return of prisoners of war is being carried out and consultations between the delegations of the two South Vietnamese parties in Paris to solve political questions have begun. The two sides affirm the important significance of the International Conference on Viet Nam and point out the urgent necessity to carry out all the provisions of the Act of the Conference.

At the same time, the two sides express their concern on many cases of serious violation of the Agreement on Ending the War and Restoring Peace in Viet Nam by the Saigon administration, first of all the provisions on the ceasefire, democratic liberties and the return of civilian personnel in South Viet Nam. At present, schemes are still being carried out to weaken the position of the democratic forces in South Viet Nam and complicate and hinder the activities of the International Commission of Control and Supervisions as well as the South Vietnamese Two-Party Joint Military Commission.

Both sides believe that the US, as well as the other parties, must scrupulously implement the Paris Agreement on Viet Nam.

After vehemently condemning violations such as those mentioned above, South Viet Nam and the Soviet Union clearly point to the unavoidable setback of whatever scheme aimed at preventing South Viet Nam from following the road of peace, democracy and progress, hindering the success of the Vietnamese people's cause of freedom and independence and hampering the victory of the principles laid down in the Agreement on Ending the War and Restoring Peace in Viet Nam and confirmed by the Act of the International Cenference on Viet Nam.

The South Vietnamese and Soviet sides note with satisfaction that after the signing of the Paris Agreement on Viet Nam, the Agreement on Restoring Peace and Achieving National Concord in Laos was signed to terminate all war activities including bombings and to set up a new Provisional National Union Government. The two sides fully support the national aspirations of the Lao people to build a peaceful, neutral, independent, democratic, unity and prosperous Laos. Both sides also express their solidarity with the Cambodian people who are struggling to achieve their national rights, namely independence, sovereignty, peace, neutrality, democracy and territorial integrity.

The Soviet side declares that in the days of peace as well as of war, the Soviet people always stand side by side with the Vietnamese people and consider the support to the just cause of the Vietnamese people as their internationalist obligation.

On behalf of the South Viet Nam National Front for Liberation Central Committee, the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Viet Nam and the South Vietnamese people, Mme Nguyen Thi Binh expresses sincere and deep gratitude to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet and the Soviet Government and people, for having reserved for the just struggle of the Vietnamese people a great, effective and precious support and assistance. Mme Nguyen Thi Binh warmly praises the great achievements recorded by the Soviet people in over half a century in building and defending their homeland. She also expresses the wish that the fraternal Soviet people continue recording new and yet greater successes in every field. Mme Nguyen Thi Binh expresses her gratitude to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Soviet people for their warm fraternal reception.

The official friendship visit paid to the Soviet Union by Mme Nguyen Thi Binh, member of the South Viet Nam National Front for Liberation Central Committee and Foreign Minister of the Republic of South Viet Nam, the contacts and talks of the delegation are a contribution to the further development of the relations between South Viet Nam and the Soviet Union, between the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Viet Nam and the Soviet Government, and mark a new step in the consolidation of the friendship and solidarity between the South Vietnamese people and the Soviet people.

Great solidarity from little friends

German children in Berlin collecting money to support Viet Nam